

## Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

S E C R E T STATE 211382

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP, SHUM, PINS, MPOL, PLOS, ECON, EFIN, ETRD, KS

SUBJECT: WEEKLY STATUS REPORT - KOREA

TO: EA - MR. HOLBROOKE

FROM: EA/K - ROBERT G. RICH, JR.

### 1. NIXON TO THE EAST (CONFIDENTIAL/LIMDIS)

THE ROK EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON HAS BEEN APPROACHED BY FORMER  
PRESIDENT NIXON'S MILITARY AIDE REGARDING A PLANNED NIXON  
VISIT TO ASIA IN THE NEAR FUTURE. THE TRIP WILL RE-  
PORTEDLY RANGE FROM IRAN THROUGH SOUTHEAST ASIA, AUSTRALIA,  
NEW ZEALAND, JAPAN AND KOREA. ACCORDING TO THE INFORMATION  
GIVEN TO THE KOREAN EMBASSY, MANY OF THE COUNTRIES TO BE  
VISITED ARE ISSUING "OFFICIAL INVITATIONS." PRESIDENT

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NIXON EXPECTS TO BE IN SEOUL IN LATE SEPTEMBER. (RGR)

### 2. ROKG RELEASES 22 EM PRISONERS (CONFIDENTIAL)

FOR AUGUST 15, KOREA'S NATIONAL DAY AND A TRADITIONAL TIME  
FOR AMNESTY IN KOREA, THE ROKG RELEASED 22 POLITICAL  
PRISONERS. THOSE RELEASED, WHO HAD BEEN IMPRISONED FOR

VIOLATING EMERGENCY DECREES RESTRICTING POLITICAL DISSENT, INCLUDED A BROAD RANGE OF DISSIDENTS - SEMINARIANS, A MINISTER, A REPORTER, AN OPPOSITION POLITICIAN AND OTHER STUDENTS - BUT FORMER PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE KIM TAE-CHUNG WAS NOT AMONG THEM. WHILE WELCOMING THIS EVIDENCE THAT THE ALL-TOO-GRADUAL PROCESS OF POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION IN KOREA IS CONTINUING, WE SHARE THE DISAPPOINTMENT EXPRESSED BY PROMINENT DISSIDENTS THAT THE GOVERNMENT MISSED THE NATIONAL DAY OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE A MAJOR STEP FORWARD. KIM REMAINS IN CUSTODY AND THE EMERGENCY MEASURE REMAINS IN EFFECT. (DB)

3. NORTH KOREAN 50 MILE MILITARY ZONE (SECRET)

THE JCS HAS AGAIN SURFACED THE IDEA OF SENDING US WARSHIPS TO TEST THE NORTH KOREAN 50 MILE MILITARY ZONE, FROM WHICH ALL FOREIGN FLAG SHIPS EXCEPT CARGO VESSELS GOING TO AND FROM NORTH KOREA ARE EXCLUDED. JCS PROPOSES THAT A TASK FORCE ENTER THE ZONE FROM THE SOUTH, SAIL PARALLEL TO THE NK COAST FOR SOME DISTANCE, THEN HEAD SOUTH AND EAST OUT OF THE ZONE. WE BELIEVE A TEST OF THE ZONE MAY BE APPROPRIATE IF IMPORTANT LOS JUSTIFICATION CAN BE ADDUCED, AND THE DEPARTMENT'S SEA LAW EXPERTS ARE ASSEMBLING AN ARGUMENT. WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT SECRET

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ANY TEST SHOULD BE LIMITED IN DURATION, IN A PERIPHERAL AREA OF THE ZONE, AND PART OF A REGULARLY SCHEDULED EXERCISE. IF THE LOS ARGUMENT IS PERSUASIVE WE WILL BE DISCUSSING A MORE LIMITED APPROACH WITH DOD. (DB)

4. KOREA'S ECONOMIC BOOM MAY BE QUIETING (UNCL)

A JULY SLOWDOWN IN EXPORTS SEEMS TO HAVE REPLACED INFLATION AS THE MAJOR TOPIC OF ECONOMIC CONCERN IN KOREA, AND FEARS ARE BEING VOICED THAT THE ROK MAY NOT MEET ITS 1978 GOAL OF \$12.5 BILLION WITHOUT STRENUEOUS EFFORT. IMPORTS ALSO DECLINED SLIGHTLY AND MAJOR INDICATORS APPEAR TO FORECAST A DECELERATION IN THE DOMESTIC BOOM. ON THE "GOOD NEWS" SIDE, THE ANTI-INFLATIONARY MEASURES WHICH HAVE PUT THE BRAKES ON GROWTH, SEEM TO HAVE HAD SOME EFFECT AS THE MONEY SUPPLY FELL 1.2 PERCENT AND THE RATE OF INCREASE IN PRICES SEEMS TO BE DECELERATING. (BDP)

5. COLOR TELEVISIONS - A GROWING TRADE PROBLEM  
(LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

CONCERN OVER RISING IMPORTS OF COLOR TELEVISION SETS FROM TAIWAN AND KOREA FOLLOWING THE OMA WITH JAPAN HAD LED STR TO SERIOUSLY CONSIDER NEGOTIATING OMA'S WITH BOTH COUNTRIES. EB URGED CAUTION IN FOLLOWING THIS APPROACH, NOTING THAT VOLUNTARY ACTION BY BOTH GOVERNMENTS MIGHT EASE THE PROBLEM. STR HAS NOW DECIDED TO GIVE THE ROC'S EFFORTS TO CONTROL EXPORTS OF COLOR TV'S TO US MARKETS A CHANCE TO WORK, AND WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT THE ROKG WILL ALSO MOVE VOLUNTARILY TO FORESTALL YET ANOTHER BILATERAL TRADE PROBLEM. (BDP)

6. SOUTH KOREA GESTURES TOWARD NORTH (CONFIDENTIAL)

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SOUTH KOREA TOOK THE OCCASION OF AUGUST 15, THE 33RD ANNIVERSARY OF KOREA'S LIBERATION FROM THE JAPANESE AND THE ONLY HOLIDAY SHARED BY BOTH NORTH AND SOUTH, TO HALT FOR 24 HOURS ITS PROPAGANDA BROADCASTS AGAINST THE NORTH, PLAYING INSTEAD PRIMARILY NOSTALGIC, PRE-WORLD WAR II SONGS. IN ADDITION, ROK DIPLOMATS IN THE 38 COUNTRIES IN WHICH BOTH THE NORTH AND SOUTH HAVE MISSIONS, INVITED THEIR NORTHERN COUNTERPARTS TO DINNER OR TO THEIR OFFICIAL INDEPENDENCE DAY RECEPTION. WE DOUBT THAT THE ROKG EXPECTED A POSITIVE NORTH KOREAN REACTION, AND IN FACT, WE KNOW OF NO INVITATIONS THAT WERE ACCEPTED. THESE INVITATIONS SHOULD BE SEEN AS A PART OF THE OPEN, REASONABLE POSTURE TOWARD THE NORTH WHICH THE ROKG HAS BEEN CULTIVATING. IN THIS SAME VEIN PRESIDENT PARK'S INDEPENDENCE DAY MESSAGE FEATURED A RENEWAL OF HIS EARLIER OFFER TO ESTABLISH A DIALOGUE FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION. (DM) VANCE

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